Social Media and the Classroom

C. Mitchell

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Explanation of Project:

Context:

With the increasing role of technology in our daily lives, there is a push to include technology in the classroom. At Los Medanos College, technology has been formally implemented into courses through Desire2Learn. This program allows instructors to post lectures, grades, readings, exercises, among other materials. While this platform provides students with valuable information, it is difficult for students to take full advantage of the site through their mobile devices, devices that are sometimes students’ primary method of accessing the internet. Moreover, given that nearly all students have cell phones capable of connecting to the internet, there is much potential for integrating technology into the classroom through students’ use of their smart phones. Free applications like Twitter and Instagram, with their mobile-friendly interface and profile features, may be an alternative way for students to have easy access to course materials.

Moreover, the popularity of these sites may increase students’ interest with the course materials since they can be accessed from a “fun” platform. There appears to be great potential for increasing student engagement through the use of social network sites. By increasing students’ engagement, students will be more likely to master the Student Learning Outcomes. At the developmental-level, students are often uncomfortable with the classroom and by providing students with the opportunity to connect to material through a familiar and convenient application, like a social network site (SNS), students will gain a sense of comfort and a level of confidence in the classroom, which will translate into greater success when working to meet SLO’s.

Student Learning Outcomes and Course Content Requirements:

1. Read actively and demonstrate critical thinking skills through the ability to summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize assigned readings. (PSLO 1,2,3)

2. Write, edit and revise expository essays which synthesize course readings and are clearly focused, fully developed, and logically organized. Compose essays with sentences which display a developing syntactical maturity and whose meaning is not impaired by excessive grammar, usage and proofreading errors. (PSLO 1,4)

3. Demonstrate the ability to use strategies for academic success, including use of college resources and ability to monitor and evaluate one’s own learning. (PSLO 1,5)

“It is the intent of the department that English 90 be a course that engages students and speaks to their issues and concerns.” (Course Content)

Research Question:

Can utilizing social media in the classroom improve student engagement with course materials and in the process improve student success with student learning outcomes? Can students learn to “monitoring and evaluating their learning” by reflecting on the integration of social media into the classroom?
Methods of Investigation:

First, I gave students a survey, asking them to share their views on integrating social network sites into the course. After reviewing students’ feedback, I created a course-specific Instagram account and a course-specific Twitter account. I linked these accounts with the course Desire2Learn (D2L) webpage so that students could choose to use D2L, Twitter, or Instagram to access material. By linking the accounts, no one was required to create or use a SNS account if they did not want to do so.

Throughout the semester, I looked to use technology to engage students with course material through a variety of ways. First, I offered students the option to complete some homework assignments using SNSs. Additionally, students had the option to submit classwork through SNSs. Students were also asked to respond to questions by either posting to D2L or Instagram. I also posted supplementary material to SNSs to further engage students. I posted homework and examples to Instagram, and I posted or retweeted supplementary materials to Twitter.

As part of the English 90 SLO’s, students are expected to “demonstrate the ability to use strategies for academic success” as well as “monitor and evaluate” their learning. After integrating SNSs into the course, I asked students to reflect on and identify their strategies and preferences for accessing the information. By giving students options for utilizing SNSs or D2L, I allowed students to determine the method that would best support their learning. Through class conversations and written reflections regarding the integration of SNSs, students “monitored and evaluated” learning and applied strategies for academic success.

Project Activities:

Description of Preliminary Research:

At the beginning of the project, I gave students a preliminary survey that gauged interest in integrating SNSs into the classroom. I asked students if they had SNS accounts and if they would be interested in using them for school work.

Results and Analysis:

Of the 25 students who took the preliminary survey, 23 had some sort of SNS account. Out of the 25 students, 15 students specifically commented that they would be interested and excited to use SNSs for class. Most students said that they already use SNSs, so it would be easy for them to integrate course materials. Some students specifically pointed to an increased interest in the material. One student explained, “I feel that students will be more engaged in the class because these are the things we find to be appealing and entertaining.” Another student commented, “I like D2L, but if you posted the readings on a social media site, I feel I would be more interested in reading it.” Finally, another student said that “incorporating social media sites into classes and our homework would be great. We already use social media almost daily.” Through this survey and our subsequent conversations about the use of D2L and SNSs, students were reflecting on their learning and the ways that learning can happen through a variety of ways, including social media. Moreover, students specifically pointed to the fact that utilizing SNSs will increase their interest and engagement with the material.

Two students did not have SNSs accounts, but one said she would be interested in creating an account for the course. The other student was concerned about getting distracted online. He noted, “I believe using a social media account for homework would really distract me from my primary
Other students, even those who were excited about using SNSs in the classroom, expressed concern about getting distracted. One student said, “I might end up doing or looking at something else.” Another added that “the downside might just be getting distracted.” In our class discussion, students highlighted the potential to get distracted but argued that it would be best to provide students with an option to use either D2L or SNSs so that they could choose the platform that worked best for them. By reflecting on the potential to get distracted, students monitored their learning.

Four students who had SNS accounts noted that they preferred to use D2L for homework. The four students had a variety of reasons for wanting to keep D2L as the primary resource for accessing materials outside of class. One student explained that she was not familiar with SNSs and she was already familiar with D2L, and another noted that she preferred to use SNSs for fun and didn’t want to integrate school into this activity. By giving students a choice, I was able to accommodate all students and provide a variety of ways to engage students with materials while providing students a chance to reflect on the method that would best serve them.

Development of SNSs Accounts:

After our conversation, I opened a Twitter account, but most students asked me to create an Instagram account instead. I opened an Instagram account and linked it to the Twitter account and to our course Desire2Learn webpage as a “newsfeed.” Throughout the semester, I posted the homework assignments and examples to Instagram. I retweeted and posted links to the Twitter account. Since the accounts were linked, I only had to post to one account and students only had to check one platform (either Twitter, Instagram or D2L) for course information, and they could choose whichever platform that they preferred. Giving students a choice allowed them to determine the best strategy for their success.

Results and Analysis:

At first, I was posting the homework and materials to D2L, Twitter, and Instagram separately. It proved to be too much work for me since I had to login and post materials multiple times. Posting to Instagram can take some time, occasionally up to 10 minutes, because it requires taking and editing a photo. After combining the platforms, I was able to effectively reach every student in the class in a shorter amount of time.

I made a point of explaining that students were in no way obligated to create or make accounts. Whenever I discussed postings in the classroom, I always made sure to provide student examples from D2L and from SNSs. I did not want students to feel obligated to get a SNS account, and I did not want the project to lead to discussions on how to post or comment using SNSs. Instead, I wanted to encourage students to access materials in a way that best appealed to their learning styles and interests. By allowing students to make a choice, students reflected on their learning strategies. They evaluated each strategy to determine which would best enable them to achieve academic success. In our discussions, students monitored their learning and identified their strategies for engaging with the material outside of the classroom.
### Description of Student Assignments:

After getting students’ feedback about their interest in developing SNS accounts, I offered students the opportunity to complete assignments using SNSs.

Early in the first unit, we were reviewing reading strategies for “reading actively” (SLO 1). For one reading, I gave students the option of handwriting their PPPC or live-tweeting their notes. In the process of deciding which method to take, students applied strategies for learning.

As the semester progressed, students were also given the option to submit homework via SNSs. Students were tasked with brainstorming ideas and a focus for their Unit 2 essay on the American Dream and their Unit 4 essay on *Bless Me, Ultima (BMU)* in line with SLO 2. By posting ideas online, students were sharing their focus and brainstorming ideas for their papers. Other times, students were required to post comments or ideas on either Instagram photos or to D2L. Students were asked to post an example of a noun appositive and to offer suggestions for how to correct a concession sentence. These assignments helped students develop syntactical maturity.

Throughout the semester students were asked to submit classwork by taking a picture and sending it to me via email or SNSs. These classwork activities were often hands-on, interactive activities that were completed in small groups. Most activities were associated with SLO 1, challenging students to read actively and take notes on an article and then complete a summary. Other activities were in line with SLO 2, asking students to develop outlines in order to write “clearly organized” essays. By having students submit the homework via technology, students could easily document and share their classwork with classmates.

### Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Assignment</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>D2L</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Total Completed</th>
<th>Completion %</th>
<th>SNS %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live tweet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>110%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Dream post</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>133%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMU characteristics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMU themes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct concession sentence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun appositive example</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Avg*: 93%  
*SNS %*: 51

*excludes live-tweet assignment
Throughout the semester, an average of 15 students (out of 20; 75%) completed the homework. In general, completion rates were below average (14 students) for assignments that required students to post on D2L or on SNSs. Of those 14 students, half posted on SNSs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classwork Assignment</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>SNS %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>outline---&gt;summary*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essay outline</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topic sentence outline</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*the top “liked” academic post on Instagram is a post of our classwork.

**Student Response:**

With the live-tweet assignment, students gave many reasons for choosing to complete the notes in a traditional way. Students explained that they did not want to post classwork on their personal Twitter homepages because they did not want to lose followers or have their friends see their schoolwork. They didn’t mind posting or commenting publically on the course accounts, but they did not want their work to appear on their own pages. Other students noted that they felt like it was more of a challenge to live-tweet. In the process of tweeting, students were limited to 140 characters, so students had to think very carefully about wording and content. One student noted that he tried the exercise, but he found that he would type something and have to erase it and retype it in order to condense the information. In the process of completing the assignment, the student monitored his comprehension and ultimately decided to apply an alternative strategy.

Students who used SNSs to turn in assignments cited the convenience and ease of submitting materials. They had constant, easy access to the account and could submit homework instantly by using their phones. Students felt like it was quicker to use SNSs instead of taking the time to log into D2L to complete homework or write out the information on a hard copy. Others also pointed to SNSs specific features, like hashtags, which allowed them to easily find the classwork and review it later. Finally, other students specifically noted that they enjoyed getting to use their phones in class.

In contrast, students who chose to submit assignments through D2L gave two primary reasons for posting to D2L. Some students said that they don’t have SNS accounts or don’t use them often. Other students felt more comfortable using D2L because it is school-sanctioned.

Additionally, students specifically commented that looking at each other’s examples online was beneficial. They stated that by posting or submitting homework publically through D2L or SNSs, they had access to their classmates’ ideas and additional examples. Students felt that reviewing each other’s examples and ideas helped them to improve their own work. In the survey, 94% cited that they looked at classwork examples online. Out of 19 students, 63% said that they read others’ homework posts on SNSs, and 73% read others’ homework posts on D2L. While only 75% of students completed homework, 90% said that they reviewed class examples.

**Analysis:**

Throughout the semester, students reflected on the multiple options for accessing course information, and they utilized the method that they felt best suited their learning. By either submitting homework through SNSs or D2L, students determined the advantages and disadvantages of each and reflected on their resources.
Although students pointed to the challenge of live-tweeting—keeping it to 140 characters—as a negative, I saw this as an incredible learning opportunity. There is potential for students to learn to “read actively” and to “summarize” in line with SLO 1 through a live-tweet assignment. If not necessarily an activity that requires students to tweet, I think that the live-tweeting process could provide students with a framework for approaching the note-taking process by detailing for them how to read actively and annotate in a clear, concise way. I think that by revising the assignment, the activity could be adapted to the classroom to teach students how to take concise notes and how to summarize.

While students recognized the benefit of reviewing others’ examples online, students did not necessarily want to post themselves. Completion rates dropped for online postings. It is possible that, for some students, posting online is more challenging than completing assignments in traditional ways. While some students noted the ease of submitting homework through SNSs, posting on D2L can be extra work as students have to use a computer and have to go through a login process to access D2L. Even when students had access to the internet through the computer lab, some did not post.

On the other hand, low completion rates may also indicate a lack of confidence. One student specifically noted “It made me nervous to post things I wasn’t sure of, but I felt involved with the interactions.” The student both acknowledges a sense of insecurity, but she also highlights the potential for these sites to build community and further engage students. The student’s comment is particularly insightful because it highlights both the potential to encourage participation but also the importance of ensuring that students feel confident in their skills. For the noun appositive and BMU themes assignments, participation was lowest. Both assignments asked students to post examples after practicing in class. It is more likely that most students did not feel confident enough in their skills to want to publically post their work. In comparison, with the American Dream post, students were asked to provide a definition or image of the American Dream. Since there really was no wrong answer, students were more willing to post responses publically. These results indicate that I should take more care to ensure that students feel confident in their knowledge when I ask them to post online. By building community in the classroom, I can increase students’ engagement and mastery of skills and also their willingness to share their knowledge.

Although participation was lower with some of the online posts, in general, students noted that they enjoyed looking at the examples online. Given that more than half of the class took time to review the homework posts outside of class is further significant. We discussed these public posts at length in the classroom, but I did not require students to review examples. Students applied strategies for academic success and monitored their own learning when reviewing the examples. They recognized the potential for improving their knowledge and they took action to apply strategies for improving their academic performance. With so many students interested and excited to look at examples, it is clear that it is important to continue to have students post materials online and to post classwork. However, I will need to make adjustments to ease students’ anxiety and to boost students’ confidence in order to boost student participation. Additionally, I may have to set aside more class time to further motivate students to post.
Description of Instructor Posts:

In addition to having students post materials using SNSs, I used SNSs to post information and materials throughout the semester. I posted examples, detailed handouts, and notes from the class. While I use D2L to post supplemental materials, I did not generally share examples or class notes. SNSs made it easy to provide this additional material because it was just a matter of taking a picture. These posts proved to be the best way to increase student engagement with the material.

With the convenience of Twitter, I would occasionally post or retweet relevant materials. The materials were connected to our class conversations and unit discussions, but I did not require students to review them. For example, we read a poem by Walt Whitman, and I tweeted a link to a recent Levi’s commercial that included a Whitman poem. I also retweeted relevant articles. I tweeted or retweeted supplemental information about 2-3 times per unit. Given that these materials were not required for the course, I did not want post them directly to D2L under the “Course Content” section. By posting an article on D2L, it gives students the sense that it is a part of the required reading materials. With SNSs, I could easily retweet a link or post a photo and clearly convey the fact that the material was supplementary.

In my past courses, I would review the homework verbally, write it on the white board, and then post the assignments on Desire2Learn in the “News” section. This semester, I reviewed the homework verbally, wrote it on the white board, and posted a photo to Instagram with a caption explaining the assignment. With traditional D2L posts, I would type out the assignment, but I would only occasionally upload a file of a reading or handout. With Instagram, I posted a photo of the readings and relevant handouts along with the assignment so that students not only had the written instructions but they also had a visual of the specific materials to use. The Instagram was connected to Twitter and linked to the Desire2Learn homepage, so students had access to the homework posts via Instagram, Twitter, or Desire2Learn

Results*:
Total number of posts: 76
Likes: 119
Followers: 13

Student Response:
Again, students noted that they were excited to review additional examples of the materials. It helped to clear up questions and provide ideas for building essays. Students also stated that it helped them get a sense of the requirements and expectations.
With the supplementary material, in general students did not review the retweeted links. Of the 18 that responded, 55% reported that they did not read them and 22% marked “N/A.” However, 22% said that they sometimes reviewed the material.

For the homework posts, student response was overwhelmingly positive. Both the students who used Instagram and the students who used D2L for checking the homework assignments found that the pictures added clarity and increased their ability to successfully complete the assignments. When asked, 80% of students responded that they liked having a visual to accompany the homework assignment. Specifically, students commented that they liked SNSs because “it has pictures,” and one student explained: “I liked seeing the pictures accompanying posts so I had a visual.” Another student commented that she “does better when she is visually learning.” In general, students noted that the biggest advantage to integrating SNSs into the classroom is the fact that it made the homework more interesting to review while clearly detailing the assignment.

Analysis:

In the past, I would only post a few supplementary examples on D2L. I was hesitant to post too many examples on D2L because I was concerned that students would be tempted to copy the material. However, by using SNSs, I was able to crop or limit material in a way that gave students ideas of the expectations and examples, but the information was not so complete that I needed to worry about plagiarism. Given students’ positive response, I plan to continue to post similar material using this method next semester.

While most students did not look at the supplementary material, given that it was optional, I am excited to see that 22% of students sometimes clicked on the links. This shows that a few students were connecting with the material outside of the context of the classroom. Even when students did not click on the articles, the process modeled for students how to identify connections in their daily lives. I observed that this semester more students reached out to me to discuss personal connections to the course material. In the past, usually one student a semester (on average) would send an email with a link to a related article. This semester, however, I had six students email, tweet, or simply show me materials and images on their phone from SNSs that connected to our class material. I think that by modeling this connection through retweeted links and related posts, students felt more confident in their ability to identify connections and felt empowered to share those connections. When students see connections to their own lives, they are more engaged with the course content and can better meet Student Learning Outcomes. I plan to increase the number of posts next semester to further model making personal connections to course content.

Posting images with the homework turned out to be the most significant aspect of the project. Initially, I expected the focus of the project to be students’ posting through SNSs. As the project progressed, I learned that most students did not mind the traditional methods of completing assignments, but students were incredibly interested in the way that SNSs could be used to deliver examples and homework assignments. In the student survey and throughout the semester, students commented that seeing a visual of the specific materials that were needed to complete the homework helped them gain a better understanding of the assignments. D2L can be a rather clinical platform. In comparison, Instagram, with its filters and editing options, is inviting and aesthetically pleasing, making it all the more interesting for students to review. Additionally, I observed when students had a
visual of the handout and the assignment, there was less confusion and fewer students emailed questions asking for clarification.

I also saw that students were thinking about the homework more often when they checked it on SNSs. I posted the homework within a few hours of the end of class. Soon after I had posted the homework on SNSs, students would “like” or “favorite” the post. Then, later, students would again “like” or “favorite” posts as the deadline for homework approached. Instead of reviewing the homework just once, when they logged onto D2L to complete the assignment, students saw each post in their SNSs feed and then returned to it to view it later when they planned to complete it. Students reviewed the material more times when they viewed it on SNSs, demonstrating their engagement.

Students’ specific comments and feedback provide a clear example of the way that they have evaluated their learning style and learning process. By recognizing the fact that adding a visual helped them accomplish the homework, students tracked their learning process. They were monitoring the methods that work best for them and were applying strategies to increase their academic success. I plan to continue to post homework assignments to Instagram because the visual element increased engagement and added clarity by appealing to visual learners.

Complete Student Feedback:

Results:

**Submitting homework:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitting work via SNSs was easy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I preferred submitting work via SNSs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked looking at others' examples</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Submitting Classwork:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitting classwork via SNSs was easy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I preferred submitting work via technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commenting/Posting:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I liked posting to SNSs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read others’ posts on D2L</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read others’ posts on SNSs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked looking at others’ examples</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructor Posts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I checked D2L for homework</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I checked SNSs for homework</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I checked out retweeted links</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked having a visual with the homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

**What I liked best about submitting homework through SNSs:**

**Convenience:**
- It’s at your hand/quick/easy
- Instagram was easy and done fast.
- It was easy and convenient for me
- The ease of accessing and turning in assignments
- It was always easy to go back and look at the examples or work we were supposed to do
- What I liked about submitting homework through SNS is that it was very quick and accessible. Was how fast and easy it was. Very efficient.

**Helpful:**
- It helped me to recap on previous assignments and things we talked about in class.
- Also the use of visual media with coursework was helpful
- I believed it was helpful because it did give you the opportunity to view your classmates’ ideas as well.

**Interesting:**
- I just enjoy technology so being able to use my laptop makes doing homework a tad fun.

**I didn’t submit homework through SNSs because:**

**Don’t have/use SNS:**
- I barely use my SNSs
- I don’t have an Instagram or Twitter account

**Not professional:**
- I don’t want to use my private Instagram to do homework.
- I preferred D2L because it felt more conventional that it was designed for academic purposes

**What I liked best about submitting classwork through SNSs:**

**Convenience:**
- The ease and ability to incorporate media into course work
- It gives easier access with what we do on a regular basis.
- I like how fast I can submit because of how I’m already logged in and I know SNS very well.
- Easy navigation through SNS and the classwork was organized in some way through hashtags

**Looking at examples:**
- I can use other people’s work as examples
- I can look at others examples that helps me get ideas for homework.
- This also gave you ideas for essays and the views of others opinions
- Having class discussions available

**Interesting:**
- It was fun talking about it and doing it in class
- I could use my phone during class and post things like I’d post anything else.

**What I liked best about posting a comment to Instagram:**

**Convenience:**
I could find it easily if I needed it. I liked how the picture is a set theme so it’s easy to talk and comment on

Engagement:
People can agree or disagree with what you’re saying
It connected me with classmates and Instagram always works
It made me nervous to post things I wasn’t sure of, but I felt involved with interactions
The comments were fun and relatable to my own experiences
Just a good way to communicate outside of class

Examples:
Looking at others examples online
Seeing other examples helps add clarity

Instagram-specific features:
The ability to add media also summarize with hashtags
The fact that the postings had visuals. I do better if I am visually learning.

What I liked best about posting a comment to D2L:
All-encompassing:
I could see other posts

Professional:
It seemed more “school like” to post to the school’s site.
It’s more of a school feeling than going through social media
It showed me around D2L and how to use it for future reference

Convenience:
It is more simplified
D2L had well organized threads for comments
I am more comfortable with D2L since I’ve used it before.

D2L negative:
I find D2L complicated not user friendly
I couldn’t figure out how to post on D2L
Hated it/never did it.
Sometimes the site would be down temporarily.

What I liked best about the homework posts on Instagram/Twitter:

Convenience:
It’s what we do every day anyways so it’s a reminder to do your work.
It was easy to refer back to.
I can quickly and easily check it
Again, it was super fast and easy access to see and attain homework

Clarity:
I appreciated when other classmates responded to the HW assignment. It helped clear up any questions that I had.
I can go back and recap off of them while constructing my essay

Instagram-specific:
Visual aid accompanied with homework
I like the homework posts on Instagram and Twitter because it has pictures
I liked seeing the pictures accompanying posts so I had a visual.
I thought it was pretty cool with the abilities to use hashtags
I go on insta/twitter every day. It makes my feed more educational
It would be nice if all my instructors posted homework to Instagram.

What I liked best about other instructor posts (examples, classwork) on Instagram/Twitter:

Helpful:
Multiple examples on responses for homework
It gave me an example
Instructor posts were easy to understand
It shows what the paper looks like
The examples helped immensely
It did give me more of an idea of what she was looking for

Visual:
I’m visual so it was nice to use the links to see what pages the homework was on or just even pictures to make it more interesting and actually want to be more involved.
I liked the way it was presented.

**I chose to check D2L for homework because:**

- **Convenience:**
  - Twitter and Instagram were both available giving more options and so were the class discussions.
- **Professional:**
  - It was a school website, not SNS
- **All-encompassing:**
  - I wanted to check my grades and overall participation
  - It provided more of an overall platform.
  - D2L also had the grades for work that has already been completed
  - It incorporates Instagram and Twitter, plus extra things, so it seemed more efficient to me.
  - It has my other classes with it so I might as well check HW for English.

**D2L “negative”:**

- I used to check D2L but now I check Instagram because it’s easier
- I never did. My D2L never worked and was inconvenient.

**Analysis:**

The data from the student survey rating system was mixed. The rating system did not translate as clearly as I had hoped. Students seemed confused about the “either/or” element of the D2L and SNSs dynamic. I think some of the phrasing on the survey could be interpreted many ways, which could lead to conflicting responses. While helpful to some extent, the ratings did not seem as reliable as the comments.

The comments seemed to better reflect students’ attitudes and experiences as I observed and as they stated in class discussions. In addition to the comments in the previous sections, the comments revealed a few interesting points about Instagram and SNSs specifically. Students noted that they had fun looking at Instagram photos. One student noted that she enjoys doing homework on her laptop and by checking the assignments online, she felt more excited to do the work. Another student noted that it made his Instagram feed more educational. Others said that it was fun to use their phones in class. Students also explained the advantages of using hashtags. A student commented that hashtags kept the materials organized and easily accessible. Another student said that using hashtags allowed him to sum up material. By pointing to specific benefits of using Instagram, the student feedback highlights the fact that integrating SNSs does provide students’ with another avenue for engaging with the material.

**Conclusion:**

**Observations:**

Initially, when I began this project, I had not really considered posting homework to be a major focus. Rather, I saw it as a consequence of creating the accounts. I was more focused on increasing student engagement by having students post materials through SNSs. However, as the semester progressed, the homework posts became a central focus of the project. Given the feedback, the aspect of the project that had the greatest impact on students was the use of visuals. Students got more out of my posts when there was a photo and Instagram requires a photo, so it was easy to adapt my practices to better serve students. A few students even noted that the homework seemed more fun if they got the assignment off of a SNSs. By giving students options and discussing with students the reasoning behind their choices, students identified and explained the strategies that helped them to succeed.

Another key aspect of the project was that students enjoyed looking at examples. Whether the posts were of classwork, notes, or handouts, students found the examples helpful and they returned to
them. Multiple students commented that they reviewed the examples when writing their essays and homework. Students felt more connected to the course and to the material when they had a clear idea of what was expected of them. While this is not a groundbreaking conclusion, it is important to recognize that SNSs can provide instructors with an easy way of posting these examples since the application is designed for it.

While students had a clear preference for the way they accessed the material, either via D2L or SNSs, students were happy to have a choice. Students chose the method that seemed to them to be the most convenient. Some noted they had to look at D2L for other classes, so they checked D2L. Others used SNSs because it was convenient and they could access information from their phones. Regardless of the way they accessed the material, students noted that having options helped them succeed because they had multiple ways to get the information and could decide for themselves which way worked best. Students felt empowered to make decisions about their learning and their strategies for academic success.

Another take-away from the project was that some students really dislike D2L. I did not offer a place for students to critique D2L in the survey, but a few students made a specific point of identifying flaws with D2L. Students commented that it is difficult to access at times or that it isn’t always working. A few others noted that D2L is not as user-friendly as SNSs. By providing students with an alternative, students were able to access material even when D2L wasn’t available.

Concerns:
While I do believe integrating SNSs into the classroom can help further engage students, I do have some concerns as well. Some students commented that using SNSs meant that they were not completing homework in a “professional” way, and these students make a good point. Does allowing students to complete homework through SNSs allow students to get away with using a familiar platform rather than an academic platform? Additionally, does it enable students to avoid academic writing? On the other hand, I do think at the developmental-level it is important to get students involved and active in the classroom. If students feel more connected to the class through SNSs, then I think it is something to pursue. However, it is also important to challenge students to adapt to the academic environment, and I will work to create a better balance next semester.

I also observed that some of the students who were most active on Instagram did not do as well in the course as those who only used D2L. They were engaged with the material, liking it and responding to it, but that did not necessarily translate into them completing the homework. I wonder if allowing them to use SNSs became too much of a distraction? If they went online to check homework, perhaps it also meant they were online for other purposes as well. On the other hand, perhaps those students would be even less involved in the course if they could not connect with the course through SNSs. It is difficult to say at this point, but I think utilizing SNSs next semester will allow me to collect more information.

Suggestions for Improvement:
Overall, I think that integrating SNSs into the classroom can foster students’ interest in the material. Next semester, I plan to continue to post homework assignments, examples, and relevant
materials through SNSs. The greatest outcome of the project was that students responded so positively to having the visuals with the assignments. I will continue to post visual aids for students.

I will also continue to have students post homework or comments online in a public setting because students learned from the process and from their classmates’ examples. I will, however, do a better job of assigning homework that requires a public post only after students feel confident with the skill. I will take time to review a skill thoroughly before having students post. I may also only have students post if it is a brainstorming activity where there is no wrong answer. Another way that I will improve my use of SNSs is by having students post directly to the class page instead of having students post materials onto their personal homepages. Students were reluctant to have material appear on their homepages or profiles but were willing to publically post on the course pages, so I will be more conscious of this next time. By adjusting when and how I ask students to publically post, I hope to ease anxiety and better foster community.

Additionally, I will make sure to create a balance between SNSs and D2L. While I gave students a choice this semester, I will require students to use D2L more often throughout the semester in order to transition students into using the academic resource and completing work in a professional way. While we discussed the appropriate ways to respond when using different platforms (Instagram, D2L, email), I will expand this conversation in my classes next semester. Moreover, if students are using Instagram, rather than D2L, they are not consistently getting access to their grades. Students who check D2L regularly are more likely to check their grades, so I will also require students to check grades on D2L.

Finally, the most “liked” comment on Instagram with seven likes, or a 50% response, was a photo of a rose and a caption that wished everyone a happy spring break. It was the only post throughout the semester that didn’t directly connect to an assignment. I worked to make the Instagram account as “academic” as possible, but students seemed to respond most when the account also had a personality. As much as I am concerned with introducing students to academic forums, it seems that these type of posts reach students, and I plan to increase the number of posts in order to build community even outside the context of the physical classroom.

Integrating social media into the classroom can increase students’ learning. By engaging students in a conversation about various ways to connect with the course outside of the classroom, students evaluated and monitored their learning. Moreover, students were offered the opportunity to apply strategies that they determined to be most beneficial to their academic success. While there are potential concerns and room for improvement, I believe that integrating social network sites, like Twitter and Instagram, can increase students’ engagement with the course and increase students’ success with mastering the Student Learning Outcomes. While I plan to continue to revise, modify, and update my methods, I do plan to continue to integrate SNSs into my courses.
Appendix:

Preliminary Social Media and Internet Survey

Directions: Fill out the survey based on your experience. The survey will be used to gage your opinion on integrating social media/internet into the classroom. Disagree=1; Somewhat disagree=2; Somewhat agree=3; Agree=4

Do you have a Facebook?  
No  Yes

Do you use it regularly?  
1 2 3 4

Would you like Facebook incorporated into the classroom in some way (post homework, classwork, ask questions)?  
1 2 3 4

Do you have a Twitter?  
No  Yes

Do you use it regularly?  
1 2 3 4

Would you like Twitter incorporated into the classroom in some way(live Tweet readings instead of annotating, tweet questions, tweet homework, display group work)?  
1 2 3 4

Do you have an Instagram?  
No  Yes

Do you use it regularly?  
1 2 3 4

Would you like Instagram incorporated into the classroom in some way (posting homework, displaying group work, etc.)?  
1 2 3 4

Would you enjoy or prefer to complete assignments using Social media?  
1 2 3 4

Would you use or look at class material if it were posted on a Social media site?  
1 2 3 4

If you don’t have a social media account(s), would you create One if we had a class account?  
1 2 3 4

Additional comments:__________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Desire2Learn homepage:
Twitter homepage:

Los Medanos College

C. Mitchell
@cmitchell4cd
English 90-0166

8 Photos and videos

Tweets
Tweets & replies
Photos & videos

134
44
18
9

Homework: complete a 1-page reflection on the group project. Make sure to study for the final essay...instagram.com/p/2bsYRfxf5x/

Instagram homepage:
Live-Tweet or Annotate?

**Context:** In our readings about social media and the internet, many authors have suggested that integrating technology into the classroom can enhance learning. In this exercise, we will put that premise to the test.

**Learning Goals:** Read actively; take notes that accurately identify main points and respond to an author with relevant and insightful questions; reflect on your learning

**Directions:**

1. Pre-read and read “Caught in the Web” (starting on page 455). As you read, **EITHER:**
   a. Complete a PPPC (the “code” notes should be taken on a separate sheet of paper. Do not take notes directly on the reading)
   **OR**
   b. live-tweet your notes using #eng90lmc

   *Note:* if you would like to complete the assignment using the live-tweet option but you do not have a Twitter, then you can type your “Tweets” on a word document, mimicking the live-tweet process. If you live-tweet the assignment on Twitter, either print your tweets to bring to class or email me a screen shot of your tweets or tweet @cmitchell4cd

2. Reflect on your experience reading and annotating. Be prepared to write a response in class. In class, we will discuss the reading and the note-taking/live-tweeting process to compare results. Do we think integrating technology furthers learning? Do we think that this process can replace reading strategies? Does it depend on the person?

**Information on live-tweeting:**

**Definition:** (verb) Post comments about (an event) on Twitter while the event is taking place.

**Example of term used in a sentence:** *I live-tweet every game [no object]: viewers live-tweet during programs and share opinions in real-time with other viewers*

**Example of the process:**

_C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd · 4m 4 minutes ago_  
Caught in the Web: more experts say internet disrupts lives. live-tweet assignment #ironic #herewego #eng90lmc

_C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd · 3m 3 minutes ago_  
women feels addicted to internet and depressed; concern is growing #eng90lmc

_C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd · 2m 2 minutes ago_  
internet addiction dates back to 1995, but still no official timeline. article is from 1996. is this still true? #eng90lmc

_C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd · 39s 39 seconds ago_  
looks like there is still some debate around the issue http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/internet-addiction-real-thing ... #eng90lmc
**P. P. P. C.**

*Preview, Pre-read, Predict, Code*

**What does P. P. P. C. stand for?**
- P—preview what you are going to read
- P—pre-read the first paragraph, last paragraph, and the first sentence of each body paragraph
- P—predict what the reading is about
- C—code (take notes in the margins) and comment on what you are reading

P.P.P.C. is intended to help you better understand what you are reading by breaking down the reading process: previewing the material, pre-reading the text, predicting what text is about before you read it, and taking notes on the text while you prepare to write a summary.

**How does P.P.P.C. work?**

**Preview:** Take a quick look at the structure and length of a reading, paying attention to the
- title
- author’s name
- publication
- subheadings
- sections
- graphics
- study questions
- bold words
- abstracts
- previews
- summaries

**Pre-read:** Read the introduction, the first body paragraph, and the last paragraph. This will help you to know what the text is arguing. Then, read the first sentence in each body paragraph. This will give you a sense of the text’s support.

**Predict:** After previewing and pre-reading, make a prediction about what the text. Answer the question: “what do you think the text is about?”

**Code:** Take concise notes on the main ideas and/or purpose of each paragraph (or, for longer paragraphs, take concise notes on “chunks” of the paragraph).

1. Read a paragraph.
2. Ask yourself: “what is the gist of this paragraph?” or “what is the point of this paragraph?”
3. Write down the answer to those questions in a few words or a short phrase in the margins next to the paragraph. Aim for around 3 to 5 words. Your code will be a “mini” summary for each paragraph, something you can return to as a guide for constructing a summary on the entire text.

**Why use P.P.P.C.?**
P.P.P.C. helps you understand and remember what you are reading. It helps you identify areas of confusion. It is also an easy reference tool for writing summaries or for assessing the organization of a text.
Example 1: Live tweet example from instructor

Example 2: Live tweet from student
American Dream homework:

@cmitchell4cd

The American Dream is all about the possession of luxurious items, comfort within ourselves, happiness within our loved ones, just whatever someone perceives as a 'better life' for themselves is what the American Dream stands for.

@pacheco_4911

American Dream is to have choices, education, career, family, and material items such as owning a nice home and nice car.

@cmitchell4cd

The American Dream is just a figment of our imagination. Hence why no one has ever achieved it.

@GiselAlexis

The american dream is....
Correct Grammar Errors:

The growing income inequality means that the American Dream is doomed government policies will need to fix the problem.

Homework part 2: post a comment that offers suggestions on ways to correct this sentence. There are multiple errors, but pay particular attention to comma splice / fused. Review 333-335 in text. #revision #edit #comma splice/ fused

14:40 pm 3/27/2015

10 Comments

- andrewanning: There should be a period after doomed. Also government should be capitalized.
- cmitchell4cd: @andrewanning great note!!
- cmitchell4cd: What other errors do people see? What are other ways to fix this sentence?
- andrewanning: Also need should be needed.
- pacheco_4911: By the time we get to the end of this sentence, I don’t understand what you are trying to say.
Homework Posts:

- cmitchell4cd Posted a photo of a book and a notebook. "For homework: complete your.
- cmitchell4cd Shared an image of a book with a note: "Read "killing women" and complete a TIPS chart (reader). Then find a..."
- cmitchell4cd Posted a photo of a notebook with a note: "For homework: read chapters 11-13."
- cmitchell4cd Shared an image of a book with a note: "Read article on pg92 in the reader. Identify old American dream, the..."
- cmitchell4cd Posted a photo of a notebook with a note: "1. Read chapters 4-8. 2. Post a..."
Classwork:
Examples:

C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd
10 Apr
Great example of how 2 xplain the connection! We will be doing more of this work so worth reviewing the example below.
Chase

Related Material:

C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd
Updated stats! #AmericanDreamin #EqualPayDay
AAUW Public Policy @AAUWPpolicy
Wanna win ur next argument abt #EqualPaynow? @AAUW's The Simple Truth breaks it down, easy read. #EqualPayDay bit.ly/TheSimpleTruth
12:00 PM - 14 Apr 15
Reply to C. Mitchell

C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd
Walt Whitman in popular culture. Levis Pioneers commercial: youtu.be/SJfediyy11w
YouTube
Levis Pioneers commercial
Walt Whitman’s “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” is a good way to sell jeans.
Reply to C. Mitchell

C. Mitchell @cmitchell4cd
"Mother Jones: Walmart gives workers a raise—but it’s not enough to keep them off the dole bit.ly/1MyCLYG pic.twitter.com/mVAAgXXdy”
2:51 PM - 02 Apr 15
Reply to C. Mitchell
Do you have an Instagram?  Y  N
Do you have a Twitter?  Y  N

**Directions:** Read the following statements about our use of technology this semester. Then, circle the number that best corresponds to what you think about the statement.

1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree, N/A = not applicable

**Submitting homework via Instagram/Twitter:**
Throughout the semester, you had the option to submit work (song lyrics, advertisements, images of the American Dream) through social media sites. What did you think of the experience?

1. Submitting work via SNSs was easy 1  2  3  4  N/A
2. I preferred submitting work via SNSs 1  2  3  4  N/A
3. I liked looking at others’ examples in class 1  2  3  4  N/A

What I liked best about submitting homework through SNSs:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

I didn’t submit homework through SNSs because:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

**Submitting classwork via Instagram/Twitter/email:**
Throughout the semester, you were required to submit classwork (outlines, summaries, group work) through social media sites or email. What did you think of the experience?

1. Submitting classwork via SNSs was easy 1  2  3  4  N/A
2. Submitting classwork via email was easy 1  2  3  4  N/A
3. I preferred submitting work via technology 1  2  3  4  N/A
4. I liked looking at others’ examples online 1  2  3  4  N/A

What I liked best about submitting classwork through SNSs:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

I chose to submit classwork through email rather than SNSs because:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

**Commenting or posting on D2L or Instagram/Twitter:**
Throughout the semester, you had the option to post a comment on D2L or post a comment to Instagram/Twitter (grammar, American Dream definition). What did you think of the experience?
1. I liked posting to D2L                  1 2 3 4 N/A
2. I liked posting to Instagram/Twitter  1 2 3 4 N/A
3. I read others’ posts on D2L          1 2 3 4 N/A
4. I read others’ comments on Instagram 1 2 3 4 N/A
5. I liked looking at others’ examples in class 1 2 3 4 N/A

What I liked best about posting a comment to Instagram:

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

What I liked best about posting a comment to D2L:

__________________________________________________________________________________

Instructor’s posts to SNSs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I checked D2L for the homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I checked Instagram for the homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I checked Twitter for the homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I checked out retweeted links on Twitter</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I liked having a visual with the homework post</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It was easy to check Instagram/Twitter for the homework</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I liked seeing examples posted on Instagram/Twitter</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What I liked best about the homework posts on Instagram/Twitter:

__________________________________________________________________________________

What I liked best about other instructor posts (examples, classwork) on Instagram/Twitter:

__________________________________________________________________________________

I chose to check D2L for homework because:

__________________________________________________________________________________

Additional comments:  
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________